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SOME REMARKS ON FAT-INFILTRATION OF THE LIVER.

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[PLATE IV.]

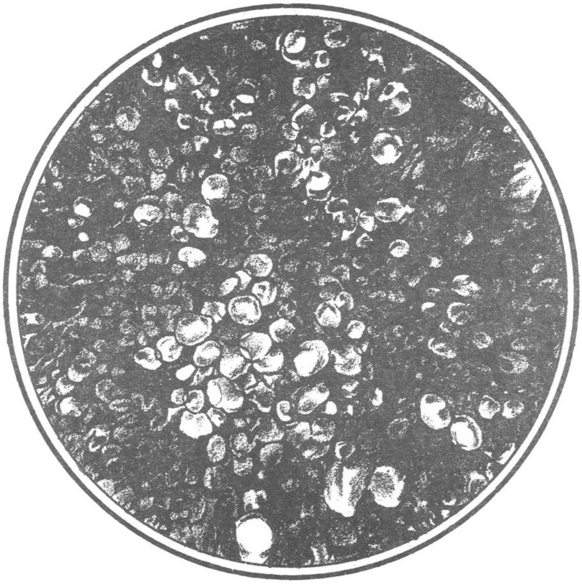
Fat-infiltration of the liver is that condition of the liver in which fat accumulates in larger or smaller drops in the interior of the parenchymal cells, without being caused by a morbid condition of those cells. So frequently does this condition exist, both in health and disease, that the liver has been called the "*Fat reservoir* of the system."

The chemical composition of this fat is identical with that found in the other parts of the body; and its consistence, and consequently that of the liver as a whole, depends upon the relative proportions of the glycerides of stearine and oleine.

Professor Schrœppel, in speaking of the origin of this fat, states: "That it is either brought to the liver cells with the blood, or it originates in the interior of the cells themselves, from the albumen belonging to them." When the albumen thus expended in the preparation of fat is *at once* restored, so that the glandular cell retains its normal proportion of albumen, fat-infiltration is produced; but when this restoration does not take place the cell degenerates into an abnormal condition, and we have what is known as fatty degeneration.

The color of the fatty liver is paler than the normal tint, presenting a yellowish, or greenish-yellow appearance. In size it is either normal or enlarged, whereas, in fatty degeneration, owing to the irreparable loss of albumen, we have shrinkage, and hence the term, yellow atrophy. Although fat-infiltration of the liver is not produced by any abnormal condition of the secreting cell, it is most frequently associated with, or caused by, disease of other organs; indeed, there is scarcely a malady in which the liver has not been found infiltrated with fat.

PLATE IV.



FAT INFILTRATION OF HUMAN LIVER.
AFTER A PHOTOMICROGRAPH BY 1/6 IN. ZEISS & "A" EYEPIECE.

Those affections in which the blood is characterized by the presence of a large amount of fat, and from which we can separate a turbid, milky serum, are those in which the liver most frequently, and to a greater extent, becomes filled with fat.

Preëminently at the head of this list we have pulmonary tubercle, and the drunkard's dyscrasia. In the case from which the specimen I show you was taken, both of these causes prevailed, and hence the so unusual amount of fat-infiltration that I do myself the honor of presenting the following case:

Charles ————, German; aged thirty-two (32) years; saloon-keeper; was of slender stature, wasted form, pale color, and excessively nervous temperament. He had been consumptive for several years, and was very intemperate; beer being the bevèrage with which he constantly kept himself under the influence of liquor, though he was never seen actually drunk.

A quarrel, in which he became madly excited, was followed by nervous prostration from which he quickly died. At the autopsy, ten hours after death, the left lung and the liver were the only organs presenting an abnormal condition; the former was infiltrated with tubercle, the latter with fat. On removing the liver from the body it was found somewhat enlarged, very plump, of a greenish-yellow color and greasy in appearance and to the touch. The small piece sent me was hardened in Müller's fluid and stained by ammonio-carmine. Owing to the presence of so large an amount of fat the staining was very imperfect, despite the fact that I kept small cubes of the tissue in freshly-prepared ammonio-carmine for more than a month. Better, but still not entirely satisfactory, results were obtained by re-staining the sections in Woodward's borax carmine.

So great is the amount of infiltrated fat in this case that it becomes almost, if not altogether, impossible to define the hepaltic lobule. The interior of the liver cells are found loaded with fat, existing in larger or smaller globules, frequently distorting the shape, and forcing the nucleus from the center to the periphery of the cell.